Higher Education Institution's response

- **Higher education institution: Global College**

- **Town:** Nicosia

- **Programme of study (Name, ECTS, duration, cycle)**

  In Greek: Διεύθυνση Φιλοξενίας και Τουρισμού (4 έτη, 240 ECTS, Bachelor of Arts)

  In English: Hospitality and Tourism Management (4 years, 240 ECTS, Bachelor of Arts)

- **Language of instruction:** English

- **Programme's status**
  New programme: YES
  Currently operating: NO

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A. Guidelines on content and structure of the report

- *The Higher Education Institution (HEI) based on the External Evaluation Committee's (EEC's) evaluation report (Doc.300.1.1) must justify whether actions have been taken in improving the quality of the programme of study in each assessment area.*

- *In particular, under each assessment area, the HEI must respond on, <u>without changing the format of the report</u>:*

  - *the findings, strengths, areas of improvement and recommendations of the EEC*
  - *the deficiencies noted under the quality indicators (criteria)*
  - *the conclusions and final remarks noted by the EEC*

- *The HEI's response must follow below the EEC's comments, which must be copied from the external evaluation report (Doc. 300.1.1).*

- *In case of annexes, those should be attached and sent on a separate document.*

1. Study programme and study programme's design and development
(*ESG 1.1, 1.2, 1.8, 1.9*)

Findings, strengths, areas of improvement and recommendations of the EEC

Findings

This BA programme in English targets undergraduate students aiming to develop a career in hospitality and tourism. It is positioned as a good opportunity for personal and professional development, through equipping students with knowledge, foreign languages, digital literacy and the skills of operations and management for the hospitality and tourism sectors in Cyprus and abroad. This is expected to support their career development and professional life. The aims and objectives of the programme should, therefore, enable students to develop their skills and increase their career prospects.

During the evaluation meeting, the management team of the College provided an overview of the institution in general and of the BA in Hospitality and Tourism Management in particular. It seems that teaching work is organised efficiently based on widely accepted ECTS-related workload standards; moreover, the interviewed students were satisfied with the provision of the College in the field of Business, which is closely related to Hospitality and Tourism Management. An effective administration structure supports the delivery of the programme. Teaching staff seem enthusiastic about teaching their students. There is adequate tourism and hospitality expertise in the team but limited research output in highly respected tourism and hospitality journals, which is essential to inform the curriculum. It is also evident that several members of staff are tourism and hospitality academic specialists and have relevant background studies. Some members of the teaching team have a good insight of the tourism and hospitality industry and they are involved in the industry and other related activities.

Quality assurance has been documented from an internal point of view to a satisfactory degree. An internal committee meets regularly to discuss quality assurance issues and intervene when this is deemed appropriate. Academic fraud is taken very seriously by the College especially because of its existing academic franchising agreement with Roehampton University in the United Kingdom; students are required to submit their assignments on the Moodle platform; these are subsequently checked online for plagiarism using Turnitin software. Students involved in plagiarism are then penalized depending on the severity of their misconducts. The new BA in Hospitality and Tourism Management was primarily designed in terms of its learning objectives and contents by the senior academic management team based on consultation with both internal and external stakeholders. Best practices at an international level were also taken into consideration. Teaching members of staff are also expected to become involved in the process at a later stage to take ownership of their modules and effectively deal with any emerging issues.

The study programme is current and consistent with developments in the industry and its content and objectives are in accordance with each other. In fact, the documentation provides a comprehensive and meticulously prepared guidance to the programme proposed. The programme follows a traditional, mainstream but inspiring approach to teaching hospitality and tourism. It offers a portfolio of theoretical business and management knowledge with modules in the areas of tourism and hospitality operations. There are thirty (30) compulsory modules accounting for 180 ECTS and ten (10) elective modules accounting for 60 ECTS. Among the latter, four (4) modules specialize in hospitality and tourism while six (6) relate to general education and business. While the originally submitted documentation was unclear as per the

role of electives, it became evident during the presentation of the study programme at the College that these play an important role.

Like other programmes currently offered by the College, the new programme is expected to attract not only Cypriot but also international students interested in hospitality and tourism studies. Two (2) out of the four (4) students interviewed by the EEC were international (and more specifically from India and Nepal) and expressed their satisfaction from the academic delivery and support services of the College.

As this is a new programme of study, the EEC understands that no public information on this is currently available.

Strengths

There is documented industry engagement, placement and professional practice interaction across the programmes offered by the College. This is a strength upon which the new programme can capitalize to help students prepare themselves for the real world. This is topical as Cyprus has a vibrant tourism industry that is actively seeking to recruit new staff. Collaborations with the local tourism industry associations can enrich the programme; such opportunities for potential engagement were also mentioned during the evaluation meeting.

Areas of improvement and recommendations

The following minor recommendations/changes are proposed:

With respect to compulsory modules, the study programme offers several modules with limited attempt to customize and contextualize learning to the students interested in hospitality and tourism; this is especially the case with economics and accounting but also statistics. The generic business modules do not include literature relevant to hospitality and tourism. Most textbooks suggested for the modules are appropriate and current; nonetheless, tourism and hospitality academic journal articles are not included in the module outlines. The EEC, therefore, recommends that:

a) *a general-to-specific approach should be followed to improve the logical sequence of modules, e.g. Operations Management (currently in Semester H) should precede Front Office Operations and Restaurant Operations Management (both currently in Semester D);*

b) *the provision of hospitality and tourism related modules should be expanded at the expense of language modules ECTS-wise (e.g. German Language I currently in Semester A) unless language training delivery becomes more explicitly specialized in hospitality and tourism oral communication and interaction; moreover, it seems that students are offered Greek Language II in Semester C without having been offered Greek Language I earlier in the programme.*

c) *the Statistics module (currently offered in Semester F) should be merged with the Research Methodology to produce two new modules on Research Methodology for Hospitality and Tourism I and II; the former can deal with quantitative aspects while the latter may focus on qualitative analysis;*

d) *contextualization in hospitality and tourism should be applied throughout the curriculum;*

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e) the Contemporary Issues in Tourism and Hospitality Industry should become a compulsory module (instead of being an elective) to ensure that students of this programme are knowledgeable about the current and possible future trends in the sector.

Moreover, the EEC welcomes the existence of a very wide list of elective modules (even if many of them are of generic business nature jointly offered by other degrees in the College) but is concerned about their sequence in the suggested study programme. In this context, the EEC recommends that both Semester A and B should contain only compulsory modules as students in their first year of study are rather unprepared to extensively choose among a wide selection of electives as currently suggested by the study programme, where four (4) out of the five (5) modules in semester B are electives. The EEC believes that such choice should be offered only in the final year of studies and, therefore, recommends that the offer of modules should be restructured accordingly.

Finally, the EEC suggests that the three (3) Summer Practicum periods should become credit-bearing modules (minimum 12 ECTS) to encourage the students to improve their overall performance. This can be done by introducing a report, which should be submitted by the students after the completion of each of the summer practicum periods and evaluated accordingly by the academic staff.

Deficiencies noted by EEC under the quality indicators (criteria)

The management team emphasised that their employability records of the College in general are very high as a result of offering courses which are very relevant to the demand of the marketplace. In the documentation of this BA programme, there is strong evidence of the connection with the labour market. The curriculum offers three Summer placements for students capitalising on the fact that Cyprus is in the epicentre of the Mediterranean tourism industry. It was also mentioned that the pass rates on other taught courses are high.

Assessment in the proposed programme is traditional in terms of a combination of final exams and coursework. As the degree is on management, it is advised that presentation skills should be explicitly evaluated and assessed as much as possible. The number of credits attached to each module is standard.

Higher education institution response

Based on the recommendations/changes of the EEC, we have already proceeded with the following actions:

a) MGT 301 - Operations Management has moved from Semester H to Semester C
b) GRE 102 - Greek Language II is now an elective course together with GER 100 - German Language I and GER 102 - German Language II.
c) MTH 204 - Statistics is renamed to BUS 502 – Research Methodology I (appendix 1) and it is offered in Semester B, while BUS 503 - Research Methodology is renamed to BUS 503 - Research Methodology II (appendix 2), still remaining in Semester H. As requested, both modules are dealing with quantitative and qualitative research methods, with BUS 503 - Research Methodology II being assessed through a final coursework - report on a topical issue related to the industry.

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d) Contextualization in hospitality and tourism will surely be applied throughout the curriculum, since our academic staff always adapts to the course description and the current industry realities.

e) The course TOU 318 - Contemporary Issues in Tourism and Hospitality Industry is now a compulsory course instead of an elective and it is offered in Semester B.

f) Based on the above amendments and by moving the following courses around, Semester B has now five compulsory courses, therefore, the recommendation of the EEC is fully adopted.

- MGT 101- Introduction to Management - from Semester C to Semester B
- ACC 203 - Accounting II - from Semester C to Semester B
- ENG 210 - Advance English - from Semester C to Semester B
- CSC 100 - Computer Applications - from Semester B to Semester A
- MGT 202 - Organizational Behavior - from Semester D to Semester C

Electives are now eight (8) instead of ten (10) and students must choose:

- Three (3) Business electives
- Two (2) General Education electives
- Three (3) Hospitality and Tourism electives

Regarding the Summer Practicum courses, we agree with the EEC's recommendation and therefore all three courses are now compulsory and credit-bearing, with 6 ECTS each (Total 18 ECTS). In order to be in-line with the curriculum (theoretical part), we switched each syllabus as follows:

- HOSP 114 - Summer Practicum I - Front Office Operations (End of Semester D)
- HOSP 214 - Summer Practicum II - Kitchen, Food and Beverage (End of Semester F)
- HOSP 314 - Summer Practicum III - Hotels, Restaurants & Bars (End of semester H)

The context of the summer practicum is now relevant with the courses taught prior to the summer practice. The Summer Practicum courses will be assessed according to the practicum guide (appendix 3).

After the above amendments, the structure of the programme of study is as follows:

PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS	ECTS
Compulsory courses	
29 Compulsory courses	174
3 Compulsory - Summer Practicum	18
Elective courses	
3 Courses of specialization - Hospitality and Tourism	18
5 General Education and Business	30
Total ECTS	**240**

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The breakdown of the semesters and the compulsory and elective courses are:

Semester A

1.	Compulsory	Introduction to the Hospitality & Tourism Industry	TOU-100	6
2.	Compulsory	Microeconomics	ECO-104	6
3.	Compulsory	English Writing	ENG-200	6
4.	Compulsory	Accounting I	ACC-103	6
5.	Compulsory	Computer Applications	CSC-100	6

Semester B

1.	Compulsory	Introduction to Management	MGT-101	6
2.	Compulsory	Contemporary Issues in Tourism and Hospitality Industry	TOU-318	6
3.	Compulsory	Accounting II	ACC-203	6
4.	Compulsory	Advance English	ENG-210	6
5.	Compulsory	Research Methodology I	BUS-502	6

Semester C

1.	Compulsory	Operations Management	MGT-301	6
2.	Compulsory	Marketing	MKT-303	6
3.	Compulsory	Organizational Behaviour	MGT-202	6
4.	*Elective*			6
5.	*Elective*			6

Semester D

1.	Compulsory	Front Office Operations	HOSP-200	6
2.	Compulsory	Housekeeping & Maintenance Management	HOSP-202	6
3.	Compulsory	Restaurant Operations Management	HOSP-205	6
4.	*Elective*			6
5.	Compulsory	Summer Practicum I - Front Office Operations	HOSP-114	6

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Semester E

1.	Compulsory	Food & Beverage Management	HOSP-206	6
2.	Compulsory	Macroeconomics	ECO-205	6
3.	Compulsory	Management Information Systems	MIS-704	6
4.	*Elective*			6
5.	*Elective*			6

Semester F

1.	Compulsory	Human Resource Management	HRM-305	6
2.	Compulsory	Case Studies in International Tourism & Hospitality	TOU-306	6
3.	Compulsory	Food & Beverage Cost Control	HOSP-208	6
4.	*Elective*			6
5.	Compulsory	Summer Practicum II - Kitchen, Food & Beverage	HOSP-214	6

Semester G

1.	Compulsory	Tourism, Heritage & Society	TOU-324	6
2.	Compulsory	Sustainable Tourism	TOU-408	6
3.	Compulsory	Hospitality and Tourism Marketing	HOSP-309	6
4.	Compulsory	Innovation in Tourism & Hospitality Management	TOU-416	6
5.	*Elective*			6

Semester H

1.	Compulsory	Managing Service Quality in the Hospitality Industry	HOSP-400	6
2.	Compulsory	European Community Tourism Law & Policy	TOU-400	6
3.	Compulsory	Research Methodology II	BUS-503	6
4.	*Elective*			6
5.	Compulsory	Summer Practicum III - Hotels, Restaurants & Bars	HOSP-314	6

List of courses

Compulsory Courses

COURSE CODE	COURSE TITLE	ECTS
TOU-100	Introduction to the Hospitality & Tourism Industry	**6**
ECO-104	Microeconomics	**6**
ACC-103	Accounting I	**6**
ENG-200	English Writing	**6**
CSC-100	Computer Applications	**6**
MGT-101	Introduction to Management	**6**
ENG-210	Advance English	**6**
ACC-203	Accounting II	**6**
HOSP-200	Front Office Operations	**6**
HOSP-202	Housekeeping and Maintenance Management	**6**
MGT-202	Organizational Behaviour	**6**
HOSP-206	Food & Beverage Management	**6**
HOSP-208	Food & Beverage Cost Control	**6**
TOU-306	Case Studies in International Tourism & Hospitality	**6**
BUS-502	Research Methodology I	**6**
BUS-503	Research Methodology II	**6**
HOSP-205	Restaurant Operations Management	**6**
TOU-324	Tourism, Heritage and Society	**6**
HRM-305	Human Resource Management	**6**
MKT-303	Marketing	**6**
TOU-318	Contemporary Issues in the Tourism & Hospitality Industry	**6**
TOU-408	Sustainable Tourism	**6**
TOU-416	Innovation in Tourism & Hospitality Management	**6**
ECO-205	Macroeconomics	**6**
MIS-704	Management Information System	**6**
MGT-301	Operations Management	**6**
HOSP-400	Managing Service Quality in the Hospitality Industry	**6**
TOU-400	European Community Tourism Law and Policy	**6**
HOSP-309	Hospitality and Tourism Marketing	**6**
HOSP-114	Summer Practicum I - Front Office Operations	**6**
HOSP-214	Summer Practicum Ii - Kitchen, Food & Beverage	**6**
HOSP-314	Summer Practicum Iii – Hotels, Restaurants & Bars	**6**

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Elective Courses

Business Electives - 3 Courses

COURSE CODE	COURSE TITLE	ECTS
CSC-302	Introduction to E-Business	**6**
FIN-304	Financial Reporting	**6**
FIN-403	Financial Systems and Auditing	**6**
BUS-404	Business Strategy	**6**
MKT-405	Advertising and Promotion	**6**
MKT-501	Marketing Intelligence	**6**
BUS-504	Business and Society	**6**
SOC-505	Understanding Social Change	**6**
MKT-601	Social Marketing	**6**
BUS-602	International Business	**6**
ECO-605	Development Economics and Policy	**6**
MKT-412	International Marketing Strategy	**6**
MKT-703	Consumer Behaviour	**6**
BUS-502	Entrepreneurship: New Venture Development	**6**
BUS-201	Business Environment	**6**
BUS-300	Business Communications	**6**
HRM-402	Employee Relation	**6**
BUS-802	Business Policy and Corporate Strategy	**6**

General Education Electives - 2 Courses

COURSE CODE	COURSE TITLE	ECTS
BUS-604	Change and Creativity in Organisations	**6**
HST-705	European History	**6**
HST-100	History of Cyprus	**6**
LAW-803	International Law in Contemporary Society	**6**
LAW-804	Human Rights and the International Order	**6**
BUS-805	European Integration	**6**
SCO-100	Introduction to Sociology	**6**
PSY-100	Psychology	**6**
GER-100	German Language I	**6**
GER-102	German Language II	**6**
GRE-100	Greek Language I	**6**
GRE-102	Greek Language II	**6**
FRE-100	French Language I	**6**
FRE-102	French Language II	**6**
MTH-102	Maths	**6**

Hospitality and Tourism Electives - 3 Courses

COURSE CODE	COURSE TITLE	ECTS
HOSP-302	Facilities Layout and Design	6
HOSP-304	Meetings, Events and Conference Management	6
HOSP-360	Casino Management	6
TOU-300	Special Interest Tourism	6
TOU-106	Geography of Tourism	6
TOU-320	Recreational Tourism	6
TOU-405	Tourism Planning and Policy	6
TOU-406	Destination Management and Marketing	6

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2. Teaching, learning and student assessment (*ESG 1.3*)

Findings, strengths, areas of improvement and recommendations of the EEC

Findings

All teaching staff are experienced and excellent in the use of Moodle, the virtual learning environment used at the College. During the EEC's visit there was an obvious spirit of teamwork and collegiality among the staff who assured the EEC that they informally discuss the classes and are aware of the content of each other's teaching. Peer observation of teaching takes place at least once per year. New staff members are mentored by senior staff.

Internal monitoring of the programme is done through the Internal Quality Assurance Committee which ensures that teaching on the programme is adequate and appropriate (See Section 1 of this report for more information). Additionally, the teaching team meets twice per semester to discuss the teaching and learning experience of students. In these meetings areas of best practices are identified and when necessary, solutions are proposed to any issues that may arise.

The proposed programme equips the students with digital competencies in several ways:

- *through the first-year compulsory module, Computer Applications;*
- *through interact with the Virtual Learning Environment, Moodle; and*
- *all assignments are submitted electronically using Turnitin, indicating that students are knowledgeable about plagiarism and its consequences.*

Students with different abilities are provided with additional support by the teaching staff through regular meetings. These can take place in the staff room. However, an adequate space is available for private meetings as well. The English language tutor provides students with extra help with the language. In addition, students with learning difficulties and other issues have access to a counsellor onsite.

Students will be taught research skills in the final year module, Research Methods (please refer to recommendations on this module in Section 1). The programme does not explicitly provide the opportunity for students to write a research paper. However, on a few modules, the assignment requirements provide the opportunity for research and independent learning. These will be monitored and supervised by the teaching team of the respective module.

Strengths

The EEC would like to commend staff members of the College on dealing with student problems of both academic and personal nature in a professional yet caring manner.

The teaching rooms are well equipped with state-of-the-art facilities as also discussed in section 5 of this report.

Moodle is available in English for this programme. Learning materials are made available to students via this platform on a weekly basis one week in advance. This will assist students with learning difficulties such as dyslexia.

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Areas of improvement and recommendations

Minor changes are recommended.

a) *More emphasis should be placed on research by developing research-based formative and summative assessments throughout the programme but more specifically in the third and final year of study.*

b) *Academic journal articles should be included in the list of references to better inform the curriculum about the latest research developments in the fields of hospitality and tourism especially on the third and final year of study.*

c) *The Research Methods module needs to be assessed by the means of a piece of research for example, a report on a topical issue related to the industry.*

d) *Learning resources (including electronic subscriptions to academic and professional hospitality and tourism journal databases and books) at the library need improvement as also discussed in section 5 of this report. It is recommended that the College invests in more library resources.*

e) *Students currently have access to Microsoft Office. It is recommended that the College invests in statistical data analysis software such as SPSS and at least in one simulation programme relevant to Tourism and Hospitality (e.g. Amadeus GDS) to enhance teaching and student experience.*

Deficiencies noted by EEC under the quality indicators (criteria)

No deficiencies noted by EEC under the quality indicators

Higher education institution response

Based on the above minor recommendations/changes of the EEC, we have already proceeded with the following actions:

a) In respect to the recommendation of the EEC, that more emphasis should be placed on research-based formative and summative through the programme, we would like to point out that this is in full balance with our philosophy as a College. In all our programmes, we promote research as an assessment method for the mid-term evaluation, either in a form of a coursework, or a group work. This will be the case for this programme as well.

b) Our academic staff constantly upgrade their teaching material with books, articles and journals, in order to provide students with the latest developments in the specific field of study. This is a standard practice for every programme of study. Therefore, we assure that our teaching staff, will continue enriching their teaching material with the latest research findings (theirs or others).

c) Based on the recommendations of the EEC in the assessment area 1 above, we have already structured the course BUS 502 - Research Methodology I (Semester B) and restructured BUS 503 - Research methodology II (Final Semester). The aim of the course (BUS 503) is to enable students to develop further the skills and knowledge gained on the course by applying them to the analysis of a specific business problem or

issue, via a substantial piece of independent work carried out over an extended period. Students will demonstrate proficiency in the design of a research project, application of appropriate research methods, collection and analysis of data, and presentation of results. They are required to prepare a 7000 - 10000-word report containing on a topical issue related to the industry. The assessment will include originality, overall project quality, quality of written presentation, and overall commitment of the student (appendix 2).

d) We are fully adopting the EEC recommendation and proceeding with the purchase of the subscription of the following academic journals:

- Sage Research Methods Online
- Taylor and Francis
- Science Direct

As already mentioned to the EEC during their site visit, the College has already undertaken an obligation and proceeded with these subscriptions, towards the University of Roehampton in order to secure the franchise agreement. Therefore, we are now adding Hospitality and Tourism as well.

e) The College (franchise programmes department) is already using SPSS data analysis software, as this was requested by the University of Roehampton as part of the MBA franchise programme of study that is currently running at our premises. Therefore, we have already informed the Global College IT department to proceed with all necessary actions in order to be able to support the students and the teaching personnel of the rest of the College with this data analysis software. Currently we are going through a general restructuring of our IT department and we are surely investing not only in hardware but also in software. Our newly hired IT Coordinator will examine the possibility of investing in a simulation programme relevant to Hospitality and Tourism, as we also believe that it will enhance the teaching and student experience.

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3. Teaching Staff (*ESG 1.5*)

Findings, strengths, areas of improvement and recommendations of the EEC

Findings

Existing staff should be further developed to understand the requirements of the hospitality and tourism industry and contextualise their teaching accordingly. Moreover, Business/Management generalists need to be further trained to understand the hospitality and tourism sector global challenges and incorporate them into their teaching.

Strengths

There are clear procedures in place for the evaluation of teaching and module delivery as discussed in sections 1 and 2 of this report.

Areas of improvement and recommendations

Teaching staff need to become more research active and incentivized to undertake doctoral research and/or publish in international academic journals as indicated in the Association Business Schools (ABS) list. Publications by members of academic staff in the areas of hospitality and tourism should be actively encouraged by the College. Moreover, teaching within each module could be more explicitly linked to the research conducted by the teaching team.

The programme could consider increasing the number of invited practitioners (e.g. via Erasmus+) to deliver guest lectures and/or sessions.

To strengthen the potential faculty, the programme can enhance scientific collaborations with other faculties within and outside the College. For example, to develop academic partnerships within Erasmus+.

Deficiencies noted by EEC under the quality indicators (criteria)

In every programme of study the special teaching staff should not exceed 30% of the permanent teaching staff.

The EEC understands that this is the case indeed.

Higher education institution response

We would like to point out that we strongly consider research as a vital tool for every programme of study. Nevertheless, in Hospitality and Tourism, which operates in a dynamic industry that is constantly changing and emerging.

We agree that our Hospitality and Tourism teaching staff need to become more research active, in terms of publications, attending conferences and seminars, involving students, etc. Therefore, we have forwarded the above points to our Research and Development Department, with a clear instruction to integrate them in their new academic year planning.

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4. Students (*ESG 1.4, 1.6, 1.7*)

Findings, strengths, areas of improvement and recommendations of the EEC

Findings

The College has not yet enrolled any students in the BA Hospitality and Tourism Management. The objectives set by the College are well communicated for the students' academic progress, counselling, mobility, etc.

Strengths

The College has extensive experience in managing different academic and professional programmes. Moreover, the number of students has increased substantially over the last few years and the College is adapting accordingly (new premises on the way, recruitment of new academic staff, new stakeholders, etc.).

The admission requirements for the study programme are clearly communicated to potential applicants.

The students' prior preparation/education background is assessed for both Cypriot and international students.

The College provides students with personalized counselling services.

Personalized assistance is offered to international students such as arranged pick-up from the airport at arrival, securing accommodation, opening a bank account, facilitating visa procedures, etc.

Areas of improvement and recommendations

The EEC would like to make the following minor recommendations/changes:

The Erasmus+ coordinator should encourage student/staff mobility with academic (and not only vocational) institutions.

As this is a newly proposed programme, it is essential for the College to ensure a fair recognition of its qualification. This includes periods of study and prior learning, formal and informal learning to ensure student progress and promote international mobility.

Deficiencies noted by EEC under the quality indicators (criteria)

No deficiencies noted by EEC under the quality indicators

Higher education institution response

There is not much to say regarding this minor recommendation, rather than to assure that the College will take into consideration this point and investigate possible options. The Erasmus + coordinator will encourage student / staff mobility with not only University of Roehampton but also with other academic institutions.

5. Resources (*ESG 1.6*)

Findings, strengths, areas of improvement and recommendations of the EEC

Findings

In general, the College provides adequate and readily accessible resources for the conduct of the new BA programme. The teaching and learning facilities, aids and equipment are modern and student friendly but also compliant with the requirements of people with reduced mobility. Human resources are also satisfactory from both an academic and administration point of view (as discussed earlier). Physical expansion plans of the College (i.e. the construction of a new five-storey building adjacent to the current one) based primarily on own-funding also suggest that the College is financially robust and can sustainably continue its operations in the forthcoming future.

Strengths

Interviewed academic and administration staff were enthusiastic and supportive of the College. They all argued that the College has substantially improved the quality of its provision over the last five years both academically and physically (i.e. in terms of infrastructure) thus substantially raising the overall level of student experience.

Areas of improvement and recommendations

The EEC would like to make the following minor recommendations/changes:

In particular, the EEC believes that there is room for improvement with respect to the availability of library resources. At present, the list of books in hospitality and tourism in physical form is rather limited. Moreover, the College does not seem to subscribe to major electronic publishers or reputable academic journals in hospitality and tourism such as Elsevier (Science Direct), Sage and Taylor & Francis (Routledge). To their credit, however, the management team responded positively to this concern when raised by the EEC during the evaluation meeting, arguing that the College will take all necessary actions to swiftly address this issue based on similar undertakings they had to secure collaboration with Roehampton University.

Deficiencies noted by EEC under the quality indicators (criteria)

No deficiencies noted by EEC under the quality indicators

Higher education institution response

This minor recommendation was taken into consideration and actions have been taken as noted in the assessment area 2d above.

6. Additional for distance learning programmes *(ALL ESG)*

Not applicable

7. Additional for doctoral programmes *(ALL ESG)*

Not applicable

8. Additional for joint programmes *(ALL ESG)*

Not applicable

B. Conclusions and final remarks

Conclusions and final remarks noted by the EEC

In conclusion, this BA programme aims to provide students with an in-depth understanding of issues associated with management and organisational aspects of hospitality and tourism together with basic principles that support the industry. More specifically, it aims to guide the student to a professional area that would be appealing to him/her as a future career; to equip graduates with a solid academic, technological, and intellectual background for academic and/or career advancements; to provide students with a solid foundation of management skills, marketing and sales, human resource management, finance, operations, information technology, and to help students develop their critical thinking and refine their analytical and decision-making skills. The learning outcomes of the individual modules are well-structured and balanced. Nonetheless, some of the generic business modules often overlook the specific context and requirements of the tourism and hospitality sectors and, therefore, do not provide sufficient contextualized knowledge. The modules list of references should also include journal articles with contemporary methodologies and topics. In this context, the College library should also invest in acquiring the necessary electronic and other resources.

There is sufficient information to gain a comprehensive picture of the assessment strategy. Assessment appears traditional - in most cases, there is a mid-term assessment and a final exam. There is no explicit reference to group work strategy. There is no mention of any advanced assessment methodologies or pedagogic strategies. The number of credits attached to each module is standard. There is some evidence of relevant research activity or culture among the involved members of academic staff, who are engaged in research activities with modest publication or other related outputs. In fact, academic staff should become more research active and publish in international academic journals as indicated in the Association Business Schools (ABS) list. Publications by members of academic staff in the areas of hospitality and tourism should be actively encouraged by the College to better inform the curriculum and contextualise teaching accordingly.

Having the above in mind, the EEC believes that the programme is overall substantially compliant with the required standards in each of the pillars discussed in the report. The EEC recommendations are meant to be constructive and set the fundamentals to make the programme fully compliant with minor amendments/changes. Moreover, they should not prove difficult for the College to implement if swift and genuine efforts are undertaken.

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Higher education institution response

First, we would like to welcome the fact that the External Evaluation Committee recognises that our programme of study is ***"current and consistent with developments in the industry and its content and objectives are in accordance with each other".*** Also, the EEC welcomes the fact that it is was developed in a thoughtful and inclusive fashion with the involvement of the faculty members and various external stakeholders.

Summarising the main actions already taken by our College in respect to the minor recommendations of the EEC, we have:

- restructured the breakdown of the semesters and the compulsory and elective courses, based on the recommendations of the EEC, in such a way that the programme now provides consistency and a logical sequence of modules. Especially with the modification of the Summer Practicum courses from elective to credit-bearing compulsory courses, we managed to upgrade the programme's value.
- structured two Research Methodology courses, aiming to enable students to develop further the skills and knowledge gained on the various courses, by applying them to the analysis of a specific business problem or issue, via a substantial piece of independent work. Students will demonstrate proficiency in the design of a research project, application of appropriate research methods, collection and analysis of data, and presentation of their results.
- subscribed to various other academic journals to upgrade our library resources and at the same time promote and assist our teaching staff to include journal articles with contemporary methodologies and topics as further readings in their courses. This will also allow our teaching staff to include literature relevant to hospitality and tourism instead of generic business material.
- instructed our Research and Development Department to engage our academic staff in research activities within the Hospitality and Tourism industry. Furthermore, their new academic year planning will pursue academics to become more research active and publish in international academic journals.

It can be evidenced from the above-mentioned points, that we have responded positively to all minor recommendations raised by the EEC, something that clearly strengthens our program.

We assure, that since this program is part of our multilevel long-term strategic plan, we will invest in numerous aspects in order to fulfill our goals. The success of the programme is based on our three-pillar concept, which includes the appropriate structure, consistency and content of the program, the adequacy of our academic staff and the direct link with the industry. Three elements that we strongly believe that with the valuable input from the EEC we are now able to demonstrate.

At this point, we would like to send our regards to the EEC for their exceptional, thorough, fruitful and valuable input and for the productive discussions we had during their site visit.

Looking forward for the final approval, and we are at your disposal for any further details.

C. Higher Education Institution academic representatives

Name	Position	Signature
Dr George Kriticos	General Manager	
Mr Makis Sepos	Academic Advisor	
Mr Andreas Kriticos	Director of Administration and Finance	
Dr Andreas Constantinou	Head of Research and Development Department	
Mr Neophytos Karkotis	Lecturer	
Mrs Eleni Toliopoulou	Students' Representative	
Mr Marios Michael	Students' Representative	

Date: 09.07.2019